

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-18 (Cancelled)

19. (New) A Method of making a molded preform for use in an exhaust system component of an exhaust system of an internal combustion engine, the exhaust system component comprising two opposing metal walls defining a gap therebetween, with the molded preform being disposed in the gap, and a space through which exhaust gas may flow when the exhaust system component is used in an exhaust system of an internal combustion engine, said method comprising:

providing a slurry of insulation material comprising magnesium aluminium silicate glass fibers;

providing a water removal system that comprises a screen through which water is removed by the water removal system;

providing a mold constructed to form a molded preform comprising the insulation material and being dimensioned so as to be positionable within the gap between the two opposing walls of the exhaust system component; and

processing the slurry to form the molded preform, said processing comprising providing the slurry into the mold and removing water from the slurry through the screen by using the water removal system.

20. (New) The method according to claim 19, further comprising:

chopping magnesium aluminium silicate glass fibers, for use in the slurry, to an average length in the range of from greater than about 0.3 cm to less than 3 cm.

21. (New) The method according to claim 19, wherein the aluminium silicate glass fibers have a number average diameter of 5 μm or more and a length in the range of from about 0.5 cm to about 15 cm.

22. (New) The method according to claim 19, wherein said chopped magnesium aluminium silicate glass fibers comprise aluminium oxide in an amount of 10 to 30% by weight, silicon dioxide in an amount of 52 to 70% by weight and magnesium oxide in an amount of 1 to 12% by weight based on the total weight of the glass fiber and wherein the weight percentages of aluminium oxide, silicon dioxide and magnesium oxide are calculated on a theoretical basis as Al_2O_3 , SiO_2 and MgO respectively.

23. (New) The method according to claim 19, wherein said insulation material is comprised of at least 90% by weight of said aluminium silicate glass fibers.

24. (New) The method according to claim 19, wherein the slurry further comprises organic binder material in an amount up to about 10 weight percent based on the weight of the insulation material.

25. (New) The method according to claim 19, wherein the slurry further comprises organic binder material and one or more plasticizers.

26. (New) The method according to claim 19, wherein the slurry further comprises inorganic binder material.

27. (New) The method according to claim 19, wherein the slurry further comprises an inorganic colloidal material, and said method further comprises:

forming the inorganic colloidal material in the slurry in the presence of magnesium aluminium silicate glass fibers.

28. (New) The method according to claim 27, wherein the inorganic colloid material is formed by adding two or more water soluble precursors to the slurry that combine to form a metal hydroxide.

29. (New) The method according to claim 19, wherein the mold being provided comprises the water removal screen.

30. (New) The method according to claim 19, wherein the molded preform is formed into a shape suitable for use in a double-walled exhaust pipe of an exhaust system.

31. (New) The method according to claim 19, wherein the molded preform is formed into a shape suitable for use in an end cone region of a pollution control device.

32. (New) A molded preform made by a method according to claim 19.

33. (New) A method of making an exhaust system component, said method comprising:

providing a molded preform according to claim 32;

providing a first metal wall and a second metal wall;

positioning the first and second metal walls so as to define between them a gap; and

positioning the molded preform in the gap between the first and second metal walls.

34. (New) The method according to claim 33, wherein the first metal wall is an inner housing and the second metal wall is an outer housing, and the inner and outer housings form an end cone region of a pollution control device.

35. (New) The method according to claim 33, wherein the first metal wall is an inner housing and the second metal wall is an outer housing, and the inner and outer housings form a double walled exhaust pipe.

36. (New) An exhaust system component made by a method according to claim 33.

37. (New) An exhaust system for use in a motor vehicle, said exhaust system comprising an exhaust system component according to claim 36.